

To the American Public.

I address you because there is a condition of things which either is not known, or is not duly considered, and as a consequence there is danger of wrong legislation. The chief mistake consists in the prevalent idea that the Indians of this territory are but savages, and that their country can be monopolized by railroad speculators and governed by the appointees of the President of the United States, instead of those of their own selection. Now the fact is, so far from being "ignorant savages," many of them are a highly educated and intelligent people. One proof of this is seen in the heavy mail bags which come to their post-offices loaded with letters and literature in all the various departments of science and arts. And though in consequence of the destruction of nearly all their fences and orchards, and many of their houses, and about eight thousand of their people, and all their stock, amounting to nearly six million dollars in value, which was taken alike by both the Northern and Southern armies during the rebellion—there is not the general appearance of thrift which there was previous to the war. But the people have gained not only wisdom, but a deep, appreciative sense of their right to possess and control all the affairs of their own Territory; to make and administer all its laws, and to dispose of it when, and to whom, and on what terms, they think best for their own interest, no matter how much the parties may differ on other points. The full bloods, half breeds and adopted citizens are a unit in this. Therefore, whatever fact or argument the Indian ring speculators may press upon Congress for the appropriation and control of any portion of their country, it should not be heeded until the consent of parties is obtained. Otherwise, it is morally certain that the cost will be greater than the gain, as it always is where fraud and force is used instead of reason and justice.

There are special reasons why this should be the case, and as they are reasons which even Congressmen do not realize, and the people at large know nothing about, I will state that the Cherokees and some other tribes are better educated, (in some respects,) and possess natural talent above the average of white people; but nevertheless they are not as practical, because they were raised as slaveholders. They have also plenty of stock to sell, and therefore they don't care to work any more than necessity compels them; and they have such a bitter remembrance of their sufferings while being driven from their comfortable houses and rich plantations in the south, that they do not care to make their present homes more beautiful than Nature has done, lest the whites should again be tempted to drive them away. About two fifths of them are either whites who have married Cherokee women or their mixed offspring. A large portion of them are as fair and as fine featured as the finest of the European races, and their wives and daughters would pass for beauties among the most beautiful ladies in our fashionable cities. They are reserved and very dignified in manners, and might be taken as models of decorum for meetings of worship or for legislative halls, either in the States or in Congress. They are determined to stay as they are, or like Captain

Jack, try their best to do so. There have been nearly four hundred treaties made by the United States Government with the Indians, and not one of them has been broken by them without some first important failure on the part of the government, and very often accompanied with acts of such perfidy and injustice that even savages would not be guilty of, unless as pay for what they had received. The principal business which occupies their attention at their yearly councils is, "What measures shall be taken to secure justice from the United States Government?" They have claims amounting to millions of dollars, which are acknowledged as their just due by the proper authorities who have examined them, yet they are withheld, or one half must be given to some swindling official for getting the other half; and at their last council they appropriated \$40,000 to defray the expenses of delegates to Washington, and they have had to, at different times, pay vast sums to lawyers and others, amounting in the aggregate to hundreds of thousands of dollars, to keep their Territory from being overrun by illegal trespassers, and to obtain monies which belong to them for lands which they have sold to the government for the use of other tribes. This continued injustice, together with the remembrance of the race and the manner through which they were driven from their former homes in Georgia and Alabama, has embodied itself in their minds as an ideal monster. It is well known in history that a Christian clergyman by the name of Schemmhorn was employed to coax a few of the Cherokee chiefs to sign a treaty for the removal of all the Cherokees from the Southern States, and though it was protested against by a memorial signed by 18,000 of the tribe, they were nevertheless forced to comply. Each of these chiefs, who sold their people, were, by them, put to death, and the traitor making parson is now spoken of as the "Wkeemahoyan"—a little change in the name, which makes it mean in Cherokee, the "Devil's horn." The Indians justly think that, as they are now penned up on the only spot on this continent which is theirs, not only by inheritance but by the threefold title of purchase, treaty and possession, it would be as unseemly for them to yield themselves to the government, which in their view has been as the "Father of lies and a murderer from the beginning," and has no more right to infringe on their soil than the devil had to offer kingdoms to Christ, of which he owned not a foot.

In conclusion, I am free to say that this is a beautiful country, possessing vast resources of wealth, and that its Indian owners are worthy of it. They only require the assurance of protection and justice from the people and government of the United States, and they will adopt measures of corporation, so as to link it with the great chain of all human interests, and with the general commerce of the world at large, hence the only true way to hasten the good work, is to aid them to keep out the rum-sellers, and the swindlers of every kind, and to maintain their rightful authority as friendly allies of the United States.

Respectfully,

JOHN BEESON.

Fort Gibson, Indian Ter., Jan. 12, 1874.